

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

Petrarca believed in him as Dante had believed in his grandfather —but was bitterly disillusioned. Crowned at Rome by the Cardinal of Ostia, on Easter Day, 1355, he returned to Prague : " with the crown which he had received without stroke of sword ; with the purse full of money, which he had brought empty ; but with little glory for virtuous deeds, and with great disgrace for the debasement of the Imperial Majesty."¹ "Oh," exclaimed Petrarca, " if thy grandfather and father met thee in the passage of the Alps, what thinkest thou they would say ? Emperor of the Romans in name, thou art in truth only the King of Bohemia." ²

At Siena and at Pisa, the imperial passage was marked by a revolutionary outbreak and the overthrow of the oligarchical government.

While on his way to Rome, the Sienese ambassadors, headed by Guccio Tolomei and Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni, had sworn fidelity to the Emperor at Pisa on behalf of the Nine, and he had sworn in return to preserve the liberties of Siena, and to make the Nine his vicars. But when, on his arrival at the city in March, the nobles and populace rose together, clamouring " Long life to the Emperor, and death to the Nine," the utmost that Charles would do for the unlucky magistrates was to refuse to surrender their persons to the fury of the mob. He received their abdication, forced them to renounce all the privileges he had granted them, and to annul the oath he had sworn to their ambassadors, while the populace were led by the younger nobles to sack their houses and drag their official chest through the city at the tail of an ass. The rektions and adherents of the Nine hid themselves as best they could. No one would receive or speak with them. Their servants deserted them. The very priests and religious shrank from them as though they had the plague.

The government was entirely reformed in the interests of the lower middle classes. A new supreme magistracy of twelve *popotani*, henceforth known as the Twelve, the *Signori Dodici*,

¹ M. Villani, v. 54.

² *De Rebus Familiaribus*, Lib. XIX. ep.